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W. J.

Towning Street.

1st December 1847.

THE BRITISH PROVINCES IN NORTH AMERICA.

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Colonial Land and Emigration Office,

20 November 1847.

Sir,

I compliance with Earl Grey's directions, we have carefully perused the various communications from Canada and New Brunswick on the sufferings which have attended the immigration of this year. We now proceed to furnish the Report required from us upon them; and in so doing, we shall not confine ourselves to proceedings belonging to this Board, but shall equally mention in their place the measures of Government, and any facts requiring to be generally known, in order that, as we understand Lord Grey to desire, the whole subject may be brought under review together, in a convenient shape for the information of the Provincial Legislatures, and for consideration in this country.

Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners to B. Hawes, Esq. November 1847.

Representations on the sickness and distress in British America have been received from public bodies, which, even if the gravity of the occasion was not in itself apparent, must have commanded attention from the weight due to their own authority. The Crown has been addressed by both Houses of the Canadian Legislature, as well as by the Corporation of Montreal. In New Brunswick the Legislature was not sitting during most of the immigration, but an earnest appeal has been received from the Common Council of St. John, the great port of arrival in that province. All of these addresses agree in representing, that not only has the recent immigration introduced disease which has spread to the resident population, and in various ways swelled the amount of distress, but also that it consisted to a large extent of destitute, vagrant or helpless classes; and while every disposition is expressed by the authorities to receive their fellow-countrymen hospitably, they insist upon the necessity of devising means to prevent the recurrence of this year's sufferings.

Representations from the British Provinces.

We trust we may be permitted, at the outset, to express the deep concern with which we have read these accounts of the ravages of disease amongst bodies of people about whom our duties had necessarily engaged us in much correspondence, and for whose protection we can truly affirm that, during the trying season which has elapsed, our time and thoughts were constantly occupied in endeavouring to secure a faithful and vigorous exercise of such powers as the law affords. But, instead of dwelling on sentiments of regret, which must be shared by every person of humanity, we shall proceed at once to the practical questions which arise out of the subject.

Two topics, it will be observed, have to be considered; viz., the sickness, and the destitute or helpless condition of the people who emigrated. These grounds of complaint appear distinct from one another. For should the former admit of being more effectually opposed in future years by any new regulations, it might still remain a question whether persons of unsuitable age or habits could be successfully prohibited from effecting, or proprietors be prevented from assisting them to effect, their removal to the colonies. Both evils, we believe, to the extent to which they prevailed in the recent season, will be found traceable to the extraordinary state of suffering in Ireland. The chief questions that will suggest themselves are probably, what were the causes of these misfortunes, whether they could have been averted this year, and whether they admit of prevention hereafter.

Two distinct evils; viz. the sickness, and the class of the emigrants.

Before proceeding to more general considerations, there are two preliminary statements which appear to us essential to remove misconception. In the first place, we would point to the enormous extent of the emigration. In 1846, which was a year of larger emigration than any that preceded, it amounted to 129,851 persons. But in the first three quarters of the present year the emigration has extended to no less than 240,732 persons, almost the whole of them consisting of Irish emigrants to North America. Whether the probability of this vast efflux of people ought to have led to any special legislative measures, is a question which we by no means propose to pass over or neglect. It will be considered in its proper place. But in the meantime, it is important to bear in mind, that the very fact of the departure of such enormous and totally unprecedented multitudes, and still more the cause by which it was produced, could not fail, with the best arrangements, greatly to augment the probability of suffering and distress.

Enormous extent of the emigration.

In the next place, it is necessary distinctly to remember that none of the people were in any way selected or sent out by the Government. Nor does there even appear reason to conclude that any very large proportion of them were sent out by their landlords. On the contrary, we are assured on high authority, that long beforehand, the people were engaged in their preparations to escape from the

Not selected by the Government.

want and misery of their own country. All the money that could be spared was laid by, and the Savings Banks were laden, as is well known, with deposits, which the best informed persons did not doubt to be destined to this purpose. No emigration could have been more thoroughly spontaneous. Whether it would have been right or possible to stop it, is a question which may be asked, and on which we shall be ready to submit a few remarks before we close this Report. But for the purpose of forming any clear judgment on what actually occurred, it is essential to understand that the Government had nothing whatever to do with the selection of the emigrants, but that they consisted of people who, seeing starvation impending at home, used the pecuniary means they possessed to provide themselves with a passage to a country where they thought that they would be able to live.

Having thus endeavoured to guard against two misapprehensions which we believe are not of infrequent occurrence, we would observe that, although it has not hitherto been deemed that Government could interfere with the kind of people who go out to the colonies, it has always been considered part of its duty to seek from the Legislature, and duly to enforce, such general regulations as might tend to protect the passengers against frauds on shore or disasters on the voyage. We proceed, therefore, to mention how far there was ground, from previous experience, to suppose that sufficient precautions existed for these objects; what would appear most obviously to have been the causes of the change which occurred this year; and especially how far there is any reason to suppose that it can be ascribed to any neglect of duty in the officers entrusted with enforcing the law.

State of health in
emigration of pre-
vious years.

The annual returns show that in no earlier period of five years had so many people emigrated as in the five years ending with 1846, and yet the whole of this large emigration was effected healthily and prosperously. We annex a return, by which it will be seen that the deaths on the voyages to Canada did not exceed one-half per cent. or five in every 1,000 persons embarked, and that the deaths in quarantine did not exceed $1\frac{1}{2}$ for every 1,000 persons embarked. And as evidence of the state of health and efficiency in which they landed, we annex a summary of the successive statements of the emigrant agents in Canada, showing that the people found no difficulty in getting employment, and had become readily absorbed in the mass of the population. The Government, therefore, at the commencement of the present year, was in possession of this fact, that in the preceding five years a greater number of persons had emigrated to North America than had ever done so before, and had emigrated, under existing arrangements, without sickness and without any serious difficulty or disaster.

Rate of mortality
this year ascribed
to the fever in
Ireland.

But in 1847 a famine having occurred in Ireland, followed by fever, it appears by some of the latest returns from Canada, that the deaths on the voyage have increased from 5 in every 1,000 persons embarked to 55, or to eleven times their previous rate, and that so many more having arrived sick, the proportion of deaths in quarantine to the numbers embarked has increased from $1\frac{1}{2}$ to no less than 60 in the 1,000, making a total mortality of nearly twelve per cent. One example is even mentioned where, by extreme care, the fever having been averted during the voyage, it broke out after arrival, so deeply laid were the seeds of disease. Can there be any doubt of the reason why, all public arrangements remaining the same, so sudden a change had occurred? How violent had been the disease in Ireland may be seen from a part of the Poor Law Commissioners' Annual Report. The number of inmates in the workhouses having increased from 50,000 in April 1846, to upwards of 100,000 in April 1847, the number of deaths among those inmates had increased from about 160 per week to no less than 2,700, or from 3 in a thousand to 25. It appears, that in the first four months of this year, 54 officers connected with workhouses, including 7 clerks, 9 masters, 7 surgeons and 6 chaplains, died out of the number of 150 who had been attacked by disease taken in the discharge of their duties.

No sickness in
common ships from
uninfected ports.

We have seen it mentioned as a matter of reproach to Government, that whilst British emigrants have this year suffered so much, no unhealthiness appeared amongst foreign emigrants. But this very fact points to the true cause of the evil. German passengers have made the voyage healthily, because there has been no fever in Germany. In like manner it is a remarkable fact, that the ship returns after arrival do not exhibit great sickness amongst vessels sailing from the majority of Scotch or English ports, nor even from several of the Irish ports. But from Liverpool and from Cork, where the fever which had been produced by the famine

famine was most extensive, the disease amongst the passengers has been the greatest; and the other principal cases will be seen by the returns to have occurred in vessels sailing from ports where the fever was the most severe.

Another fact to which we would draw particular attention is, that whilst ships quite filled with emigrants from healthy places made the voyage successfully, there are instances (as will presently appear) of vessels sailing under the most favourable circumstances from Cork, carrying military pensioners well fed, and under the care of their own surgeons, who suffered quite as much as the other emigrants from the same locality. Thus the most ordinary arrangements were enough if ships sailed from places where no pestilence prevailed; the best arrangements were fruitless, if they sailed from infected ports.

Great sickness in the best ships from infected ports.

The question of the sickness in this year's emigration has been discussed in a letter to the "Times" from the late Dr. Coombe, not less temperate in its tone than judicious and humane in most of its suggestions; and in the sequel it will be found that we have not failed to bear several of them in mind. But our object here is to notice one point which appears to us to require explanation. Dr. Coombe's letter quotes a remark reported to have been made by Earl Grey in the House of Lords, that the emigrants had "embarked in such a state of health that in some cases the very change to a better diet on board of emigrant ships had caused fever to break out amongst them." And the letter then points out the limited and inadequate sustenance which the ship's ration could afford, and suggests that Lord Grey must have been misinformed.

Remarks on the ship's allowance of bread-stuff.

We are anxious to explain that it has never for an instant been supposed that the ship's allowance of bread constituted, without other food, a sufficient and proper sustenance for passengers to North America. As a security against actual want, the vessel is bound by law to furnish daily a pound of bread to each passenger; but it has always been enjoined upon emigrants that they ought to furnish themselves with other kinds of food; and so they always have done, until this year's scarcity. But the present question is not whether the ship's bread is enough for the whole support of a passenger; it is whether, when a man had previously been starving, the change even to that diet might not in some instances have been one of the causes which brought on fatal disorder. Whatever may be the true answer to this question, the authority for Lord Grey's remark is to be found in a statement, to which we had drawn attention, by Dr. Douglas, who has for several years visited and examined the vast multitudes of emigrants who have arrived in Canada, and than whom no man is better entitled, both by knowledge and by the humane interest he takes in the subject, to have his opinion cited. In a letter, in which it is impossible not to see that every expression is dictated by genuine feeling, he says, "all the Cork and Liverpool passengers are half dead from starvation and want before embarking, and the least bowel complaint, which is sure to come with change of food, finishes them without a struggle."

We shall conclude our notice of the apparent causes of this year's sickness, by quoting the opinion of some of the officers of the largest experience in British America. Mr. Buchanan, as Lord Grey is aware, has for several years discharged the office of Chief Emigration Agent at Quebec with much credit. Mr. Perley has had the same opportunities of observation in New Brunswick as Mr. Buchanan and Dr. Douglas in Canada. Now from Mr. Buchanan (who, we regret to say, has suffered from a dangerous attack of fever), we have not yet any general comments; and he merely remarks in one place that, as we have above said, the ship's allowance is not in itself a sufficient amount of food. In a letter which we have recently seen from Dr. Douglas, he writes as follows:—It has been said "by people not informed on the subject, that the frightful mortality and sickness was caused by the over-crowded state of the passenger-vessels, and the want of proper food and medical attendance. Now, however much these might have mitigated the evil, it could be easily proved that it was not caused by their want. The thousands of German emigrants who arrived this year, all came in good health, and they were more crowded in consequence of their greater quantity of baggage. The transports 'Blenheim' and 'Maria Somes,' with pensioners and their families, from Cork, were just as sickly as other vessels, yet these had plenty of room in well ventilated vessels, good staff surgeons, and were regularly supplied with good wholesome food, animal and vegetable, daily. The disease was in all cases brought on board the vessels (not generated there), and it found fit subjects in the half-starved miserable wretches who composed the mass." Mr. Perley, whose intelligence and zeal are favourably known to Lord Grey, also concurs in chiefly attributing "the greatly increased mor-

Opinions of the principal officers in America on the causes of sickness.

"tally to the debilitated state of the emigrants before embarking, and their inability to bear the fatigues of a sea voyage after long fasting and other privations."

Of course we do not mean that if the nature of the case admitted of putting the people under strict discipline and control, or if their circumstances were such that they could be better provided with clothing, more cleanly in their habits, and better fed, all these favourable elements would not greatly improve their chances of health. On the contrary, Sir William Colebrooke and some of the agents often justly point attention to the superior condition in which vessels arrive, when the masters have fortunately been able to enforce attention to any of these points. But this circumstance has been common to the emigration of every year. All we have wished to show is, that no serious misfortunes have occurred in former emigrations, the cause of the great difference between them and the emigration of this year, has been the state of Ireland.

Discharge of their duty by the emigration officers.

Next comes the question, whether there has been any neglect of duty by the officers employed to enforce the Passengers' Act. We trust that this will not be assumed against them merely because misfortunes have occurred, of which we have just shown how comprehensive and how powerful were the causes. Circumstances beyond their control have this year produced the most deplorable sufferings, in the midst of which the only just question, as far as regards these officers, is whether they have faithfully discharged such powers as they have at their disposal.

In support of the hope we entertain that they will be found to have so acted, we might partly rest on the nature of the correspondence in which we are daily engaged with them. We might also refer to the opinions which we often find expressed by gentlemen of station who have occasion to pass through the places where these officers are employed, and to see the manner in which their duties are performed. And at some of the largest ports in the kingdom we have good reason to know the satisfaction felt by the merchants and resident public authorities with the conduct of the Government emigrant agents. But we will not dwell on any of these topics, because we think that the most direct evidence how the duty is discharged is to be found in the reports which arrive from the other side of the Atlantic.

Every emigrant ship is visited and examined immediately on reaching the British provinces by officers specially appointed for the purpose, who report each violation of the Act, which if it be of a kind that could have been prevented or detected beforehand, is then made a subject of inquiry in this country. Now we will not lay any stress on the circumstance that no returns have yet arrived from Canada, pointing out defects or reporting the necessity of prosecutions there, because under the extreme pressure of this year it is very possible that it may have been found impracticable to observe the usual rigour, or that the detailed returns may still be incomplete and may arrive at a later date. But we beg leave to point out, that throughout the more general official reports which have been received from Canada, there is not the remotest intimation that there appeared any signs of neglect of duty in the circumstances under which the ships have sailed. If there had been reason to suppose that there were indications that the fever was in any degree traceable to defects for which the Passengers' Act afforded a remedy, it is inconceivable that the principal officers in Canada, who were witnesses of such lamentable sufferings, would not have mentioned the fact. But, on the contrary, we have shown already that they ascribe the sickness to very different causes.

And from New Brunswick we are able to supply some information in detail. Returns have been received for 81 ships; in five of which there was a very limited excess in the number of passengers, mainly occasioned by differences in the mode of computation, and far too small to affect the people's health. With respect to two of the vessels, it was complained that they had only a deck on temporary beams or decks, and it has been judged that the officers in this kingdom are not at liberty to object to the others, if they are securely fixed. We have ascertained that they attended to the subject in these two instances, and satisfied themselves, to the best of their judgment, with the fastenings, which we do not understand to have given way.

Setting aside the preceding instances, which are at any rate not of a kind directly to affect the people's health, we find that out of the 81 ships which have as yet been heard of, there are only three in which it has been detected that there

there was any defect in the quantity or quality of provisions laid in before sailing. One of these vessels (viz. the "Sea") was despatched by a firm at Liverpool, which had long been watched, and frequently prevented before from sending bad provisions. They escaped detection in the present instance, but their license will be opposed at the end of the year; and it may consequently be expected that they will be removed from the trade. In another case, the vessel (the "Bloomfield") had been driven back to Ireland, and the law, which has since been amended, did not at that time afford adequate means of compelling the provisions to be replenished. The third case is that of the "Magna Charta," in which we have no doubt that the quantity of the provisions on board was too small. But it would appear that some imposition must have been practised before starting, as the receipts were produced for the full quantity necessary, and their sufficiency was attested by the master, who afterwards made the complaint. We may, perhaps, here explain, that a defect now and then may be expected to escape the preliminary inspection in this country; but that for that very reason it is part of the system to rely also on the check supplied by the officers at the port of arrival. Having thus specially reported on three cases in which defective provisions were mentioned, we may observe, that, with respect to the great majority of the ships, it is common to find the goodness and sufficiency of the provisions especially noticed in the Returns.

On an unfavourable remark made by Mr. Boyd, at St. Andrew's, without specifying instances, we have reported separately.

But while, for these reasons, we would submit, that there is no ground to assume that the enforcement of the ordinary law was neglected, we may be allowed also briefly to advert to the special measures which were adopted to meet the exigencies of this year.

The emigration estimate was at once increased by Her Majesty's Government from 10,364*l.* to 23,813*l.* Five officers were appointed at new stations in Ireland. Lieut. Hodder, at Liverpool, whose energies were to be so severely taxed by the vast multitudes who pour through that town, was reinforced by some very efficient assistants. The vote taken for relief in Canada was increased from 1,000*l.* to 10,000*l.*, or to ten times its previous amount. These measures took place before any extensive sickness had yet become prevalent here, or been reported from the colonies. And as soon as the sufferings among the emigrants became known, the Government forthwith sent large supplies of the disinfecting fluids recently invented, both to Canada and New Brunswick, and distributed them among the subsequent emigrant ships; besides despatching Colonel Calvert to Canada, at great expense, almost immediately after his experiments had been made known in Parliament. There has not been time to hear the result.

No sooner did the emigrant ships begin to arrive in the St. Lawrence with sickness amongst them, than Mr. Buchanan procured the appointment of a medical board, despatched large supplies of provisions to the quarantine station, and engaged a small steamer to act as a tender to the health officer, for the purpose of landing the sick, collecting provisions, and otherwise facilitating the service. Lord Elgin at once caused tents sufficient for the reception of 10,000 men to be issued from the Ordnance, which measure was immediately approved by Earl Grey. His Lordship also conveyed to the Governor general an intimation, which has since been repeated, that Her Majesty's Government would be prepared to apply to Parliament to contribute an equitable proportion of the burthen thrown on the province in consequence of the distress and the calamities prevailing in this country. The same principle will, we understand, be also applied to New Brunswick; and we perceive by Lord Grey's despatch of the 4th of October, that 20,000*l.* is already placed at the disposal of the provincial authorities in Canada.

We have heard it imagined, that 50,000*l.* had been destined to the relief of distress in Canada, which was afterwards withdrawn. This is a pure mistake. There was a project of offering loans to that extent to Canadian proprietors to assist in furnishing employment; but this would only have applied to healthy emigrants, and had nothing whatever to do with the relief of sickness.

At this Board we took an early opportunity of addressing a letter to all the emigration officers in this country, warning them of the momentous nature of the season which might be expected, and stating that we reckoned upon their exertions to meet the occasion adequately. One of our number repaired to Liverpool to inspect the manner in which the service was conducted at that great port, and to consult with Lieutenant Hodder on the best means of securing an efficient discharge of the duty throughout the harassing months which were

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likely

Special measures adopted in the course of the present year.

Increase by the Government of Estimate and of Officers.

Disinfecting fluid.

Proceedings in Canada.

Further proceedings in this country.

likely to ensue. Some additional suggestions and improvements in the Passengers' Bill, which has since become law, were the fruits of this visit.

Grant for ships put back in distress.

We were authorized to expend a moderate sum in meeting the difficulties which might be expected from vessels driven back by weather, a fund which, in some cases, we found of great service in alleviating distress, and enabling people to supply themselves with the requisites for a renewed voyage.

Information and ship regulations distributed.

A short and simple notice for the information of emigrants of the humbler classes was drawn up, and we caused several copies to be put on board every passenger ship; and although there are no means of compelling the observance of discipline among the emigrants, we ought to mention, that the masters of all passenger vessels are furnished, by our desire, with certain tables of regulations recommended by authority of this Commission for the good of all on board. We have been assured that this is calculated materially to assist commanders who wish to promote cleanliness and good order.

Instructions to land sick passengers.

Nor did we think it necessary to confine ourselves within the powers strictly belonging to us by the Passengers' Act. We authorized the several officers to call in medical aid should they suspect the existence of fever, and to insist upon the landing of any infected passengers before the ship should sail, even though the law gave no positive right to make such a demand. We felt sure that in such an emergency no one would blame our advancing beyond mere legal powers of interference; and, in point of fact, the course we desired was acquiesced in by all concerned, from the obvious necessity of the case.

Impossibility, however, of detecting the cases of incipient disease.

But unfortunately the seeds of disease were so rife, that no mere casual inspection of large multitudes of people suddenly assembled together from a distance, and whom, by the nature of the case, it was also necessary not to detain, could avail to bring the evil to light. In several of the ships which put back fever had extensively broken out after the first day or two at sea, showing how widely spread must have been the beginnings of disease when the people started. We are convinced that in such a state of things no medical inspection could have been generally successful, unless the law and the habits of this country had been such that the people could be detained for some time for observation, whether or not they wished it, in places free from the danger of new infection. But we need scarcely say this would have been impracticable. At Liverpool alone more than 8,000 would often arrive and depart in the course of a week. Setting aside all other difficulties, barracks or tents would have been necessary for at least 10,000 or 12,000 persons.

Inquiry made as to carrying Surgeons in the ships.

We anxiously inquired amongst some of the most eminent members of the medical profession whether, if the ships were prevented from sailing without surgeons, it would be possible for owners to procure them in sufficient numbers and with sufficient promptitude not to stop the emigration. We have always been favourable, as Lord Grey is aware, to the measure, if it could be shown to be practicable. But we found that no one well acquainted with the circumstances would venture to recommend the introduction of such a rule this year. The rate at which people were proceeding was such that at least 622 surgeons would have been required in the course of the first six months. Nor would they all have been required at a few large towns where a considerable supply of surgeons might more reasonably be hoped for; but some of them must have been found, without delay, at each of the various ports and creeks of England, Ireland and Scotland from which emigrants may happen to proceed; and in cases where the condition could not be fulfilled, the consequence would have been, that poor people who had come from great distances to a strange port, and had parted with all their means, would have found the master of the ship unable to give them the passage for which they had contracted.

Question whether Special Legislation should have been tried.

But even supposing it admitted, that the existing law had not been neglected, and also that in ordinary years that law had been sufficient for its purpose, it may be asked whether the Government ought not to have proposed special legislation for the extraordinary circumstances of this year. This is a question which, in the main, must belong to higher authority than ours; but we will offer a few observations. We had proposed in the winter, as will be within Lord Grey's recollection, a Consolidated Act embodying some improvements which we thought desirable, and we afterwards selected from it, by his Lordship's desire, such clauses as appeared to us to be more immediately wanted; but we cannot for a moment say that we think that if either the longer Bill had been brought into Parliament, or the shorter one had been passed at an earlier stage of the Session than actually took place, either could have prevented the sweeping misfortunes of this season.

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The fact is, that at the commencement of the year, no fever whatever having yet appeared, and the existing law having been found sufficient in the greatest seasons of emigration—a starving people being at the same time about to fly from famine to a land which promised plenty—it is hardly to be conceived that any Government could have proposed, or that the public would ever have received, those stringent and almost prohibitory enactments which alone could have afforded even a chance of preventing the disease which appeared in the summer. The fever, as we mentioned before, frequently broke out almost immediately after departure, plainly showing that it depended on no faults within the ship, but that it was taken out from the place of departure. We doubt whether any measure whatever would have been efficient except some one which either directly or indirectly compelled the great majority of the emigrants altogether to relinquish their purpose.

State of this question at the beginning of the year.

In the expectations of efficacy from public measures on this subject, it seems too often to be assumed, as is remarked before, that emigrants to North America must in some way be selected by or fall under the direct power of the Government. Complaints are expressed that so many poor people go, that so many weak people go, that they are not more effectually compelled to observe good order and cleanliness on board—all these remarks assuming some authority on the part of the Government in these matters; but no such authority exists. A large number of ships go to North America for timber and other cargo; a great number of people having the means at their command pay the price for which the masters are willing to give them a passage, and, except in so far as any broad and general rules of protection may be laid down by law, it is difficult to see how the Government could interfere with this practice. No system of passports exists in our country. It would be contrary to all its usages that any of the Queen's subjects having the means of payment in their possession, should be prohibited from passing from one part of her dominions to another.

More power of control ascribed to the Government than would be possible.

N means of selection.

No passports in this country.

And even if the principle were conceded, it is necessary to bear in mind the immense extent of the operations which would have required to be dealt with, and the difficulty of controlling a people flying from starvation. From all parts of Ireland, during the second quarter of this year, nearly 150,000 persons were streaming towards the ports of embarkation, many of them having been for months preparing for their expedition, having thrown up any employment or lands which they previously had, and by an arrangement which in the main is very salutary, having already selected their ship, and paid for their passage. At what stage of their progress were these vast multitudes to have been arrested? were they to have been sent back to the homes at which, if they had possessed any means of subsistence before, they must have parted with them in coming away? or, if they were to be detained at the ports for observation, could suitable buildings have been found, apart from the risk of fresh infection, to lodge 40,000 or 50,000 people month after month? and would the public at large have undertaken to support during their detention those people, a large part of whom had expended their last means in providing merely for the journey and the voyage?

No means of detaining and lodging such multitudes of emigrants.

We confess that after reflecting on these difficulties, we are led to think, that when it had pleased Providence to afflict Ireland with a famine, and consequent fever, which could not be subdued even on the land, it was little likely that any human contrivance could have averted the same evil from the multitudes who had made their arrangements for a long passage by sea.

How far means might justifiably be adopted in the British provinces in America to endeavour to ward off great burthens or sufferings from this source, is a different question, to which we shall advert in the sequel. Hitherto, it will be observed, we have only been discussing the causes of the sickness, and how far they could have been defeated by any precautions in this country. But since, even in respect of the voyage, it is commonly supposed that some of the measures adopted this year in the United States were of a very beneficial tendency, and since we believe that a good deal of misconception exists on this subject, it may be convenient that we should state, as far as we can learn, what those measures really were.

Question of Legislation in the Colonies reserved.

The Congress of the United States passed a law by which the number of passengers is limited to one for every 14, instead of one for every 10 superficial feet of the deck. This, we have no doubt, is conducive, so far as it goes, to the health of the people. We shall consider afterwards whether the example ought to be followed.

Review of the American laws on the subject.

At New York half a dollar a-head is payable as hospital money, and the master of each vessel is required either to give bond that his passengers shall not become chargeable within two years, or else to pay one dollar as commutation money:

the master always prefers the latter. It is a mistake to suppose that the option on this subject has been withdrawn at New York. Unless we are misinformed by gentlemen who are daily dispatching large ships full of passengers to New York, the practice regularly is to pay the hospital and commutation money, which it will be observed is in substance neither more nor less than the emigrant tax of Canada and New Brunswick. There may be a question of amount, but the principle is the same.

In respect to Boston, we have had some difficulty in getting precise information. The practice used to be simply to levy an emigrant tax of two dollars a-head; but we believe that this year the authorities have in some instances though not universally, put in force a new law, which empowers them to demand a bond of 1,000 dollars for each passenger apparently indigent, that he should not become chargeable to the state or the city for 10 years. But whenever this measure is put in force to any extent, it must simply become necessary that the ship and passengers should sail away, and go to some other country; and this has, in fact, occurred at Boston in the course of the present season. When it is remembered that a large ship will sometimes carry 400 passengers or more, and consequently that, under such a law as this, the master of a single vessel might be called on to give security for a sum approaching half a million of dollars, the effect will not be surprising. But in the British provinces, where it could never be contemplated, nor, we are certain, be wished to get rid of immigration altogether, some more measured kind of precaution could alone be available.

We have nothing to add on the recent American laws. And having explained before some of the reasons why we should doubt the possibility of having introduced in England this year any legislative measure which would have effectually averted the fever, we leave that topic.

Remedial measures
in this country.

Next we proceed to the subject of remedial measures. For although the evil when it raged to so fearful an extent might not have admitted of correction, we should be most desirous not to miss any instruction which such heavy suffering may afford, and to consider how far it points to any additional precaution in ordinary years against similar disasters.

We by no means overlook the caution with which it is necessary to interfere in the detail of such subjects by law. There is always the risk that such legislation must either be so general as to be easily evaded, or so minute as to be vexatious, and that while the sufferings caused by careless or extortionate dealers may never admit of being thoroughly prevented, the attempt to do so may deprive more respectable or judicious persons of the opportunity of conveying poor emigrants, in safety, with the cheapness which would otherwise be practicable. Bearing this in mind, we shall endeavour, before we conclude, to suggest one provision which shall give the dealers themselves a direct interest in bringing over the passengers in good health.

But although the price of conveyance will be unavoidably enhanced, yet, after the sufferings which have occurred, it may probably be deemed right towards the people, and just to the British Provinces, to adopt other precautions against sickness and want. Should this be the view adopted by Her Majesty's Government, the following appears to us to be some of the most simple and practical measures that could be adopted:

Reduction of
numbers.

First, A reduction in the number carried would unquestionably tend to diminish very much the chances of sickness and mortality. It would somewhat compensate for evils of defective ventilation, and in various ways would improve the condition of poor people not of very cleanly habits. We should be inclined to suggest that only one passenger be allowed to every 12, instead of one to every 10 feet.

Addition to the
ration.

Secondly, It was always intended, as we have explained before, that the ship should only find bread, and that passengers should find themselves in other kinds of food. On general principles, it seemed best to leave them as much discretion as possible, because they could probably supply themselves more economically, and could also suit their own taste and habits. But experience having shown the irresistible temptation, in a year of scarcity, to throw themselves exclusively on the ship's allowance, we are inclined to think it necessary that this ration should, for the future, include the whole of what is necessary for their support. For this purpose, we think it might be enacted that there should be an allowance of a quantity of about one pound and three quarters of solid food per diem, of which half a pound, at least, should consist of bread or biscuit, and half a pound of beef or pork, leaving the rest

to consist of such articles as the owner or broker might fix, keeping within the kinds enumerated in the Passengers' Act. We, for the present, only propose the total of one pound and three quarters provisionally, not having been in a position to gain the general opinion of practical persons; but we feel little doubt that it is very nearly the right quantity.

Thirdly, After the remarks made in the earlier part of the Report, we need not say how many are the doubts whether surgeons can be successfully required to be carried in every ship. But, although it may be thought that, even if procurable, many of the practitioners obtained in such vast numbers could not reasonably be expected to be of other than very limited abilities, yet we must confess, that were the measure practicable, we should feel that the people gained security, by having with them any man of even the most ordinary medical education. We have, in a former letter, suggested an inquiry from the heads of the profession as to the number of surgeons whom merchants would be likely to find available, and as to the amount of cost; and upon the answer will, probably, depend Lord Grey's judgment on the present question.

Surgeons to be carried, if practicable.

Fourthly, We think that so much of the value of the Passengers' Act depends upon the efficacy of the inspection, that as it is impossible to provide satisfactorily for this object at all the numerous small ports and creeks of the United Kingdom, it would give great additional security for the due enforcement of the law, if it were thought allowable to enumerate all the principal ports from which emigration takes place, and to require that vessels should not sail from any other ports with passengers to North America. It is very possible that this may be open to insuperable objections; but we have felt bound to mention it as one means of guarding against the otherwise almost unavoidable escape of some bad vessels from places too remote and too inferior in consequence to justify the maintenance of an Emigration Officer.

Limitation of ports from which emigrant ships may sail.

There appear to us the simplest and most practical means which could be taken in this country for giving additional security for health. They agree with suggestions thrown out in an address from the Legislative Assembly of Canada. Almost all of them also are included in Dr. Coombe's suggestions; and at the same time they had offered themselves to our own minds as the readiest and most available measures before we had read his letter.

Dr. Coombe further suggested the use of a ventilating apparatus; but although we have often inquired into different proposed methods, we have never yet found any which we are satisfied could at once be required by law to be brought into universal use.

Another suggestion of Dr. Coombe's is, that more order and cleanliness should be enforced on board. We wish, indeed, that this result could be attained; but in speaking of enforcing discipline, it must be assumed that in some quarter or other the power of coercion should be reposed, and in whom, on board of an ordinary British merchant ship, would the Legislature or the public deem it endurable to vest powers of coercing and punishing free people who had paid for their passage across the Atlantic?

From this examination of the measures of a nature to be taken in England, we proceed to consider whether there are any which could be adopted with advantage in the provinces. In entering on this subject, the first point which attracts attention is, the universal complaint, that so many widows, with their children, and so many old and infirm persons, have been shipped off to America. It may be doubted whether all of these were sent, as appears to be supposed in the provinces, by landlords and persons of high station, or whether, in the general disposition this year to depart from Ireland, many of these unfortunate people may not have resolved by their own means to try their fate in a new country. But whatever may be the manner in which they got away, we cannot too earnestly represent that, far from the colonies being a fit asylum for the weak, an emigrant requires even more than the average of health and strength to succeed, and, consequently, that when they are assisted to go it is equally unjust to the British provinces, and cruel to the poor persons themselves, to send out those who are totally unable to live by their own industry.

Remedial measures in the provinces.

We have already shown, however, that it would be impossible for Government to exercise any control over the subject in this country. The next question that may suggest itself is, whether the provincial legislature could require that some heavy extra payment should be made on persons likely to become chargeable to

Question of a discriminating tax on unfit emigrants.

the public. To the principle of such an attempt there probably will be no objection, but we fear that it would be impossible to carry it out with fairness. The shipowner ought to be able to know beforehand with certainty for which of his passengers he would have to pay more, and for which of them less, on arriving at their destination. This, we think, would be impracticable with such multitudes as go to Canada and New Brunswick. Ten or twelve thousand pass through Quebec in a week. It is absolutely necessary on the one hand, that they should not be delayed; it would also be necessary, however, if a discriminating tax were established, that there should be sufficient time to admit of its being levied with equity. On the whole we are disposed to give up this idea, as not admitting of being carried into effect successfully.

Proposal of a higher
emigrant tax.

But we see no reason why the emigrant tax in both provinces should not be raised to two dollars, which would increase the available funds for relief, without making that difference which would do more than exclude the most indigent and worst provided class.

Subject to increase
in case of quaran-
tine.

And beyond this it may be a question, whether, in order to give the shipowner an interest in taking over the people in good health, and to render the vessel liable for part of the burthen which sickness casts upon the public, the Governor may not be usefully empowered by the Provincial Legislature to exact an extra tax, if the vessel requires to be put into quarantine. The rule might be, that if placed in quarantine for any other purpose than merely cleaning or observation, the Governor should have discretionary power to require payment of double tax, for which the shipowner should be liable, and if detained more than eight or ten days (as may be thought fit) to impose payment of treble tax.

B. Hawes, Esq.,
&c. &c. &c.

We have, &c.
(signed) *J. Elliot*
J. Rogers

Enclosure No. 1.

MORTALITY IN CANADA EMIGRATION.

Y E A R.	Number Embarked.	Number of Deaths.			Average per Cent.	
		On Voyage.	In Quarantine.	TOTAL.	Including Quarantine.	Excluding Quarantine.
1841	28,280	156	38	194	·69	·55
1842	44,692	264	54	318	·71	·59
1843	21,807	54	26	80	·37	·25
1844	20,245	86	17	103	·51	·42
1845	25,515	111	29	140	·55	·43
1846	33,025	204	68	272	·82	·62
TOTALS -	173,554	875	232	1,107		

AVERAGE OF THE SIX YEARS.

Deaths on the Voyage - - - - - 0·5 per cent.

Deaths in Quarantine - - - - - 0·13 per cent.

0·63 per cent. on number
embarked.

Enclosure

Enclosure No. 2.

REMARKS on the Means of Employment found by Immigrants into *Canada* since 1842 inclusive, collected from the Agents' Reports, as summed up in the Commissioners' Annual Reports.

IMMIGRATION OF 1842.

ALTHOUGH the emigration to *Canada* during the year 1842 exceeded that of the previous year by no less than 16,288 souls, there is reason to believe that few of the industriously disposed remained at the close of the year without employment. The number in the two years were as follows :

1841	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	28,086
1842	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	44,374

IMMIGRATION OF 1843.

THIS year the immigration was 21,727. It was as fortunate as remarkable a feature in the immigration of last year, that a very large proportion, about three-fourths of the whole, came out to their friends and relations; and it is gratifying to perceive, from Mr. Buchanan's annual Report, that there was no extensive distress among the immigrants.

IMMIGRATION OF 1844.

THIS year the immigration was 20,142. It is satisfactory to observe, that none of the industriously disposed have remained unprovided with work; at the same time, provisions and necessaries of all kinds are reported to be plentiful. The agent points out the advantages to the immigrants on their arriving early in the year.

IMMIGRATION OF 1845.

THE number of immigrants was 25,375. Several of them were possessed of moderate capital, and proceeded at once to purchase partially improved properties, or to enter into trade. A larger portion were small farmers, with sufficient means to enable them to establish themselves advantageously on wild lands, but the great bulk were agricultural labourers, many of whom had nothing even for their immediate support. The means of employment in 1845 are described by Mr. Buchanan as very abundant.

IMMIGRATION OF 1846.

THE numbers this year were much larger than in any preceding year since 1842; they amounted to 32,153. Yet the first part of Mr. Buchanan's Report, headed "Prospects for 1847," states, that "there is little, if any, distress among the emigrants of the last year," and shows his confidence in the field which is open to enterprise and industry. He concludes by repeating Mr. Hawke's remark, that the province is capable of sustaining in comfort a large annual accession of labourers, provided they be transported to the places where their services are required.